



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3006107
Applicant Name: Kenneth MacInnes
Address of Proposal: 310 30th Avenue East

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow the expansion of an existing institution (private school) into a single family zone.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Conditional Use – to allow the expansion of a private school
(SMC 23.44.022)

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☒ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition,
or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Description

The site is located in the Madison Valley on the northeast corner of East Thomas Street and 30th Avenue East in a Single Family (SF 5000) zone. The site is L-shaped, mapped as an environmentally critical area due to liquefaction, and developed with a private school named The Valley School. There are five existing buildings which serve the school children. The students range from pre-Kindergarten through the fifth grade. There is a covered playground on the site.

Area Development

Development consists primarily of single family residences in the large SF 5000 zone to the north, south, east and west. Martin Luther King Jr. elementary school is located one block to the northeast of the site. The entrance to the Arboretum on East Madison Street is located four blocks to the north. There is a mixture of commercial and multifamily development along East Madison Street.

Proposal Description

The applicants propose to expand an existing private school into a single family residence on the adjoining lot to be used for administrative offices. The first floor of the residence is 880 square feet with two covered porches. The second floor of the residence is 640 square feet including the stairs and closets. The hours of operation will be 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday through Friday. Three adults will work in the administrative offices full time. Once each week eight teachers will have a meeting with the head of the school. Occasionally one or two students will be tutored in the structure. Parents will drop in occasionally to speak to the head of the school or the administrative staff. During November, December and January admissions tours will occur one day per week.

Public Comments

Three comment letters were received during the comment period which ended May 2, 2007. Concerns were expressed about noise, loss of privacy for neighboring homes, increased demand for on street parking, increased traffic circulation, blocking vehicle access to the alley, a change in neighborhood character with the loss of residential use in the structure, loss of sunlight to the vegetable garden on the adjoining lot, and the use of woodchips on the outdoor play area.

ANALYSIS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE (SMC 23.44.022)

The Land Use Code allows the expansion of existing institutions into residential zones through the administrative conditional use process. This proposal is a private school allowed in a single family zone only through administrative conditional use approval. The Director's decision has the authority to approve condition or deny a conditional use application. This decision shall be based on whether the proposed use will be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property. The applicable criteria used for evaluating and or conditioning the applicants' proposal are discussed below.

D. General Provisions

New or expanding institutions in single family zones shall meet the development standards for uses permitted outright in Section 23.44.008 through 23.44.016 unless modified elsewhere in this subsection or in a Major Institution Master Plan.

According to the plans submitted with the application, the proposal meets the applicable development standards enunciated in Section 23.44.008 through 23.44.016.

E. Dispersion

The lot line of any proposed new or expanding institution, other than child care centers locating in legally established institutions, shall be located six hundred feet (600') or more from any lot line of any other institution in a residential zone, with certain exceptions.

Martin Luther King Jr. elementary school is not in use at this time and is more than 600 feet from the lot line of Valley School. The Bush School is more than 600 feet from Valley School as well.

F. Demolition of Residential Structures

No residential structure shall be demolished nor shall its use be changed to provide for parking.

The existing single family residence will not be demolished or its use changed for parking. The change of use is from residential use to private school use for administrative offices. Therefore, this criterion is met.

G. Reuse of Existing Structures

Existing structures may be converted to institution use if the yard requirements for institutions are met.

The existing structure will be converted to an institutional use and the yard requirements are met.

H. Noise and Odors

For the purpose of reducing potential noise and odor impacts, the Director shall consider the location on the lot of the proposed institution, on-site parking, outdoor recreational area, trash and refuse storage areas, ventilating mechanisms, sport facilities, and other noise generating and odor-generating equipment, fixtures or facilities. The institution shall be designed and operated in compliance with the Noise Ordinance, Chapter 25.08.

The proposed institutional expansion into the residence is not expected to generate any noticeable increased noise and odors. The existing kitchen is used as an informal coffee and snack area. There are no plans to prepare or serve meals. None of the activities proposed as part of the typical use of the site will exceed the maximum permissible sound levels as established and modified in the SMC Chapter 25.08. No additional parking is required nor will any be provided. Last spring the school started a program to reduce waste which has been reduced by 45 percent.

I. Landscaping

Landscaping shall be required to integrate the institution with adjacent areas, reduce the potential for erosion or extensive stormwater runoff, screen parking from adjacent residentially zoned lots or streets or to reduce the appearance of bulk of the institution.

The school campus is heavily landscaped with mature trees, plants, and lawn. The proposed expansion into the existing residence is well within the large, landscaped site and no additional landscaping is necessary for mitigation purposes. A 6 inch diameter Maple Tree, a 24 inch diameter Black Locust Tree, a 2 inch diameter Dogwood Tree, a Palm Tree, a rhododendron, and a 40 inch hedge provide a sufficient landscape buffer between the proposed expansion into the residence and the adjoining residential property.

J. Light and Glare

Exterior lighting shall be shielded or directed away from adjacent residentially zoned lots.

All exterior lighting will direct light downward or back to the building surfaces to minimize light and glare on neighboring properties.

K. Bulk and Siting

1. *Lot Area. If the proposed site is more than one (1) acre in size, the Director may require the following and similar development standards:*
 - a. *For lots with unusual configuration or uneven boundaries, the proposed principal structures be located so that changes in potential and existing development patterns on the block or blocks within which the institution is located are kept to a minimum.*

There will be no changes in potential or existing development patterns on the block as a result of this proposal. The Valley School Campus is composed of contiguous lots and no conditioning is necessary in response to the site configuration.

- b. *For lots with large street frontage in relationship to their size, the proposed institution reflect design and architectural features associated with adjacent residentially zoned block faces in order to provide continuity of the block front and to integrate the proposed structures with residential structures and uses in the immediate area.*

The house is located in the central portion of the campus away from neighboring residential uses. The proposal will not affect the existing setbacks along the street frontages which currently exist and are well suited to help integrate the institution into the neighborhood context. Therefore, the existing residential structure reflects the architectural features associated with the residentially zoned block face.

2. *Yards. Yards of institutions shall be as required for uses permitted outright in Section 23.44.008, provided that no such structure other than freestanding walls fences, bulkheads or similar structures shall be closer than ten feet (10') to the side lot line. The Director may permit yards less than ten feet (10') but not less than five feet (5') after finding that the reduced setback will not significantly increase impacts, including but not limited to noise, odor and comparative scale, to adjacent lots zoned residential and there will be a demonstrable public benefit.*

The side yard is 6 feet 10 inches from the north property line. The house on the property to the north is 55 feet 4 inches from that property line. There is a 62 foot 2 inch wide landscaped buffer between the subject building and the adjacent residence. Therefore, the reduced setback will not significantly increase impacts.

3. *Height Limit. A religious symbol and that portion of the roof supporting it, including but not limited to a belfry or spire, may be extended an additional twenty-five feet (25') above the height limit.*

This provision is not applicable for this private school.

4. *Facade Scale. If any facade of a new or expanding institution exceeds thirty feet (30') in length, the Director may require that facades adjacent to the street or a residentially zoned lot be developed with design features intended to minimize the appearance of the bulk. Design features which may be required include, but are not limited to, modulation, architectural features, landscaping or increased yards.*

The existing single family residence is less than 30 feet in length, so no mitigation is required.

L. Parking and Loading Berth Requirements

SMC 23.44.022.L provides that the Director may modify the parking and loading requirements of Section 23.54.15, required parking, and the requirements of Section 23.44.016, parking location and access, on a case by case basis using the information contained in the transportation plan prepared pursuant to Subsection M of this section. The modification shall be based on adopted City Policies and shall:

- i. *Provide a demonstrable public benefit such as, but not limited to, reduction of traffic on residential streets, preservation of residential structures, and reduction of noise, odor, light and glare; and*

No parking or loading berth modifications are requested.

- ii. *Not cause undue traffic through residential streets nor create a serious safety hazard.*

The proposed addition is not expected to have any effect on traffic and parking impacts in the area because the number of students or staff traveling to the campus will not change.

M. Transportation Plan

A transportation plan shall be required for proposed new institutions and for those institutions proposing expansions which are larger than four thousand (4,000) square feet of the structure area and/or required to provide twenty (20) or more spaces.

A transportation plan was submitted with a four part approach to reducing vehicle trips associated with the school. Before the start of each school year, the transportation coordinator sends each family a list of the other families in their respective neighborhoods along with addresses, phone numbers and the grade-level of each child so that parents can form car pools. The transportation coordinator monitors single occupant vehicle trips after school begins and makes efforts to arrange carpools.

The arrivals and departures of students are spread out to minimize impacts to the neighboring residents. Three to five children arrive from 7:45 to 8:00 AM through the gate on East Thomas Street for the child care program. Seventy students arrive between 8:00 and 8:30 AM through the gates on East Thomas Street, 30th and 31st Avenues East. Approximately 40 children arrive in 18 carpools. Ten walk or ride bikes and three take a bus with their parent. The 19 children in all-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 AM, as well as the five or six children in the morning-only pre-kindergarten program. Half of these children arrive in carpools of two or more on East Thomas Street. Two children walk to school. Five or six morning pre-kindergarten children depart at 1:00 PM from the gate on East Thomas Street. The afternoon pre-kindergarten children depart between 3:00 and 3:15 PM from all three gates. Grades one through five depart between 3:20 and 3:40 PM from the three gates. The same carpools are used, ten walk or ride bikes, and three leave with parents on public transit. There are up to ten children in the after-school care program. Two leave between 4:00 and 4:15 PM, three leave by 4:30 PM, three leave by 5:00 PM and the rest are gone by 5:30 PM. Usually two of these children walk home.

Teachers tend to arrive 30 minutes to an hour before classes start and leave one to two or more hours after the end of classes. There is a school rule that all of the children are to exit out of the curb-side doors of vehicles. No one is to exit into the street and no one is to be dropped off across any street. Monitors make sure this procedure is followed. Traffic cones are set along the curbs on the far side of the street to remind drivers of the rules. Teachers are asked to park farther up East Thomas Street beyond Dewey Place, on 30th Avenue East south of East Thomas Street or on 31st Avenue East. A public transit information center is maintained with schedules of the nearby buses, and the permanent notice that the school subsidizes monthly and annual bus passes for staff. One part-time teacher always walks, and one full-time staff member uses public transportation most of the time. Two teachers carpool.

At each open house meeting for prospective families, and at the first open house for parents each year, the head of the school impresses on the families that the school exists in an established residential neighborhood, and the school intends to be a good neighbor in every way. One way is to respect the character of a neighborhood by being quiet and by respecting the neighbors' parking places. The school has more than 500 feet of curb on the school's side of the street, so there is adequate parking without infringing on the neighbors' spots. The houses on the west side of 30th Avenue East all front on Dewey Place, so they do not park across from the school. No houses across East Thomas Street from the school front on East Thomas Street, so those spots tend to be vacant. It is anticipated that the school's existing transportation plan will mitigate the traffic and parking impacts of the school and it is currently operating efficiently. Nearby intersections operate at acceptable levels and traffic is within the capacity of the streets in the immediate area. Expanding administrative offices into the adjoining residence is not expected to change existing traffic circulation and demand for on street parking in the vicinity and no parking will be eliminated. Therefore, the transportation plan is consider sufficient to mitigate traffic and parking impacts of the expansion of the school into the residence.

DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

The conditional use application is **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS** as indicated at the end of this document.

CONDITIONS – ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

During Construction

1. All construction activities are subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance. In addition construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to **non-holiday weekdays and Saturdays from 7am to 6pm**. Activities that generate minimal noise, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition. Construction activities outside the above-stated restrictions may be authorized with advanced approval by the Director of Planning and Development when necessitated by unforeseen construction, safety, or street-use related situations.

- Signature: (signature on file)
Malli Anderson, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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